BIBLIOTHECA BRITANNICA

SOME

REASONS

Humbly Offered, to the Conſideration of both Houſes of Parliament, why the Quakers Affirmation *ſhould not paſs inſtead of an* Oath, *at future Elections of Parliament.*

IN Conſideration of the great Abuſes the *QUAKERS* have made of the *Act, For their Affirmations to paſs, inſtead of the uſual Oath*, by their ſly Equivocations, and down right Falſe Affirmings, to the Ruin of many Widows and poor Fatherleſs Children; be pleaſ'd, *Great Sirs*, to prevent for the future, their Covetous and Over-reaching Practices, to add a Clauſe to the Bill now depending in this *Honourable Houſe*, That the *Quakers Affirmation* may be of no Force where they are concern'd in Intereſt, but where they only Affirm as a Witneſs between others, there being at ſuch time no Temptation for them to lye, when it brings no Profit to them.

Such a Clauſe would deliver Her Majeſty's good Subjects from the Tyranny and Oppreſſion which they have, and are like to undergo from that People, by Virtue of that Act.

'Tis prodigious, if ſeriouſly conſider'd, that ſuch a People, which have never done one Act or thing for the Benefit or Advantage of the Crown or Kingdom, ſhould be preferr'd before all the Juſt, Pious and Vertuous People in the Nation, eſpecially in a thing that all Good Chriſtians, from the leaſt to the greateſt, when requir'd, do give the Satisfaction of an Oath; and what none are excepted from, no, not ſo much as the Perſon of our Gracious QUEEN, at Her Happy Coronation.

Moreover, theſe are the People that will Obey none of her Majeſty's Commands, not ſo much as obſerving a faſt Day, nor the Good *Laws* of the Land, no farther than they find it for their own Private Intereſt or Humour, and are not a little Proud when they can Subject the Government (as they term it) to their own Will and Pleaſure (as in the late Act,) which they could never attain to in the Reign of King *Charles* II. of Bleſſed Memory.

And 'tis obſervable, that when any thing is to be laid open that is a prejudice to their Worldly Intereſt, then they can by no means Swear.

But if it be their Advantage, then they can Swear as readily as other People; for a Rich and Eminent *Quaker* hath not long ſince took the Oath, to make himſelfe a Commiſſioner for the Queen's Tax in the County of *Middleſex*; which he had not done no doubt, but to ſerve a Turn, or to eaſe their own People, and oppreſs others that are better Subjects: Our own Clergy, and likewiſe Diſſenters, then were taxed for the Profit of their Benefits; but *Quaker Preachers*, by their ſly Evaſions, pay nothing for their pretended Miniſtry, tho', by the Relation of thoſe that have been amongſt them, it is the moſt profitable Miniſtry in the World.

Beſides, they are a People that never venture Life or Limb to propagate the Publick Good, as others do; yet, when better Subjects have, with the Jeopardy of their Limbs and Lives, clear'd a Trade, none more ready than the *Quakers* to ſuck the Sweet thereof by Traffick and Merchandize; and more eſpecially, by oppreſſing the Widows of Seafaring-Men, by concealing their Eſtates with their Books and Papers, leaving them no Help but a *Quakers* Affirmation, to diſcover all we have; and againſt all theſe great Evils and Abuſes we have no more Redreſs, than if we were in the midſt of *Penſylvania*.

Beſides they are as great Underminers of our Trade as they are of our Religion, and do brag that a Third of the Trade of the Nation is in their Hands, and ſo will have a Third of the Money, and by that do as much Miſchief as *Guy Faux* with his Gun-Powder, only not ſo ſpeedily.

So that, in fine, what greater Encouragement can be given to the whole Nation to turn *Atheiſts*, i. e. *Quakers*; and to Encourage this the more, the *Quakers* did then deſire the Act to be alter'd, that Enables Miniſters to ſue in the *Exchequer* for their Tythes; and that it may be done in ſuch a manner as will moſt Expoſe them to the Mob, to ſet them againſt our Chriſtian Miniſters, and they know that it will be a good means to make *Atheiſm* and *Quakeriſm* over run the Church, as once *Mahometaniſm* did the *Greek* Church.

The Confidence of the *Quakers* is great, that can have the Face to deſire their *Affirmation* to paſs for Votes for Members of Parliament, that did ſo lately, at the Elections of this preſent Parliament, oppoſe the

CHURCH and QUEEN with all their Power: But 'tis hop'd our Wise Senators will (as they in *Holland*) not suffer them to be Senators, nor to Vote for such; for 'tis very plain, that they know their Interest better than to Chuse those that are Zealous for our most holy Faith; but Careless Cold or Atheistical Men, and such as will betray it for Money; therefore are not to be trusted in so great a Concern, though they would take all the Oaths which the Laws require.

There is also great Notice to be taken of the Danger of their Political Government (not that they are big enough to be feared in the least, if they are well watch'd, but they are too big to be farther encourag'd, tho' not to be farther restrained) which is, that they have by that means great Power to make Profelites; which Power will be a deplorable Damage to the Nation; for the Church will thereby lose a Member, the Queen a Subject, and both Her Majesty and Kingdom a Soldier: Besides, Mistaken Persons, that desire Liberty for a Mistaken Conscience, ought to be contented without it. They also seem to boast of their Numbers? and some say, that they are Hundreds of Thousands: if so, What a prodigious Detriment is it, to lose the Help of so many Thousand Men fit for Sea and Land Service, as might soon be drawn out from them in time of War.

And for such notorious and horrid Blasphemers to be suffer'd to Incorporate themselves into a Body Politick, is prodigious; for 'tis very well known, that if an honest sincere Man does happen to be ensnar'd by them, 'tis as hard to break off from 'em, (when he sees their base and horrid Practices) as it is for a poor penitent Highwayman or House-breaker to leave his wicked Comrades; for they have such hold of them by their Worldly Interest, that they can and do ruin them and their Families, if they offer to leave them; so that poor honest People are compelled to run the hazard of their Immortal Souls for the sake of their Bodies. And it is of very Ill Consequence, to suffer them to use Arbitrary Power over their Profelites, or rather Vassals, for as such they use them, for they are under more dread to break their Canons or Orders, than any of your Laws, or indeed any Precepts contained in the Holy Scriptures; and their Dictates are directly opposite to them, as all their Writings testifie.

Therefore we humbly beseech you, our Worthy Senators, not to suffer their *Affirmation*, nor their *Oath*, to qualify them to Vote for Members of Parliament, or indeed in any case where a Trust or Power is committed; for it has been evidently made out by several Learned Divines, that *Quakerism* is a deep laid Plot to overthrow *Christianity*.

Therefore, we hope you our Worthy Patriots will be pleased to allot some Persons, that knows their Intrigues, to enquire into, and lay before Your Honours, the subtil Designs of their Yearly, Quarterly, Half-quarterly and Monthly Meetings, that their Political Government, which is the Reverse of our Establishment, may be broke and brought under. Indeed it cannot be thought, by reason of other urgent Affairs, that Your Honours can throughly examine into them, nor perhaps be made sensible of all thire great Depths and Subtilty, they are so numerous.

But some of You have lookt so far into them, as to see many of them, and earnestly desire to deliver the Souls of all our well-meaning People out of their Hands.

Has not God visibly own'd his Church amongst us, even to a Miracle, as our very Enemies themselves own, and have said, that doubtless the Finger of God was in these late Eminent and Glorious Changes: And shall we, that have had so large a share in so great a Deliverance, have so little Faith and Trust in God, as to expose the Interest of Christ, and his most holy Truth's, to these Apostates and Sons of Belial? God forbid.

And one of these crying Sins, are the suffering that much worse Sect than that of the *Nicolaitans*, amongst us, which our blessed Saviour did threaten so severely with the Removal of their Candlestick from them, who were but poor persecuted Men themselves.

What severe Judgments must we expect, if, in the Face of so great a deliverance, we shall not only Suffer, but encourage such notorious Enemies to our Saviour's Doctrine as are the *Quakers*; an Abstract of which is here Presented, and plainly prov'd to their very Faces, and which I believe, when Your Honours looks into, You will detest with the utmost Abhorence.

Let *William Penn* and *George Whitehead* if they dare appear before your Honours with their Books writ with the greatest impudence against the holy Trinity. The first with his Book entituled *Sandy Foundation Shaken* the other *Ishmael* &c. see also *Burroughs* Works page 272.

'Tis said, That *England* holds the Balance of *Europ*; but if you give the *Quakers* leave to Vote for our Members, You may be sure You will make *Them* so considerable, as to hold the Balance of *England*, and to be counted by each Party, as they shall think will suite most for their Advantage; for they boast already, that they have among them Forty Thousand Freeholders; and if so, then, Whether it be not the true Interest of the Church to use the best Methods to destroy the Political Power, of this prevailing Heresy? for it is appearent by their Writings, that *They* only ought to rule the World, see *Fishers* Works page 19, 20. and this Indulgence will bid fair for it.

From hence 'tis evident, that should Your Honours grant them this Priviledge, *For their Affirmation to pass instead of an Oath, at Elections for Members of Parliament*, it will not be difficult to determine, what a blessed Choice we shall for the future have, from that People, who so lately gave us a Specimen of their good Inclinations, in turning

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the Scale at a late Election for the Borough of *Southwark*.

The Eyes of all good Men are on this Honourable Parliament, Expecting some good Laws against that Notorious *Arian Whiston* and other Blasphemous Opinions, according to Her Majesty's most Gracious Speech; how inconsistent will it be to Punish in the Retale and Encourage it in the Wholesale; for the *Quakers* who are notorious *Arians*, and not only so, but are a Complication of all Heresies and Blasphemies that ever Infested the Christian Church, and shall such an Honourable *House of Commons*, as has been so Instrumental to deliver the Church out of the Hands of Schismatical and Rebellious Persons, Principles and Practises, let us fall into the Hands of such notorious Wretches. We must needs think, that Gardiner has no good Design on his Lord's Garden, that shall suffer in every Bed of Flowers a heap of Nettles to grow, when he sees so many good Flowers lost, and more drooping; but to go further, when the Nettles shall call for that Dung which should be laid about the weak Flowers almost dead, to see him dung the Nettles and starve the good Flowers, must be something beyond Madness and Folly.

The Reasons upon which the *Quakers* Intitle themselves to the Equity of this Act of Indulgence, is, because they pretend to scruple an Oath; whereas this Pretence is meer Hypocrisie, and only contrived that they may have the greater Opportunity to Cheat and Defraud Her Majesty's Subjects.

'Tis plain, that they can Swear whenever 'twill serve their turn; for it can be proved by undeniable Testimony of Records that *George Whitehead*, that great Teacher and Seducer of the *Quakers*, did upon Occasion take a Solemn Oath; and an Eminent *Quaker* in the County of *Middlesex* did make himself a Commissioner of the Queen's Tax by takeing an Oath; and some of the *Quakers* that are honest and sincere in their Dealings, do not at this time scruple to take an Oath, as can be proved by Records, both before and since the passing the last Act for Tolerating their *Affirmation*.

And a *Quaker* without *Bishopsgate*, was so desirous of Rule (amongst us Christians) that he went to the *Common* and took his Oath to be a Church-Warden there this present Year 1713.

It may be hoped, that this Honourable House will not give so great Encouragement to Infidelity, as to put the *Affirmation* of a *Quaker* in the Ballance against the Oath of a Christian Man; for Oaths have been hitherto the great Bulwark of our Property, and some of the most hardned Villains have been sometimes deterr'd from their evil Practices with the fear of an Oath; but if this *Affirmation* be still allowed, then will all profligate Wretches, who scruple not Lying and Cheating, be added to the Party of *Quakers*, hoping to be undiscovered in their Knaveries, and in time their Sect will grow Formidable and Terrible to the Government it self.

It can be proved by notorious Matter of Fact, that the *Quakers* have not made a Conscience of uttering the Truth, tho' they Solemnly *Affirm* it upon their Consciences in the *Presence of God*; an Instance of this may be given in the Case of Six Poor Widows here mention'd, whose Husbands Died beyond the Seas, and their Effects fell into the Hands of *Quaker-Merchants*, which with much difficulties was discovered by these poor Widows; and tho' some of them sought Redress by proper Methods in *Chancery*, have not yet been able to come at a Discovery of their Right by any *Affirmations* taken by these *Quakers*; and 'tis strongly presumed they never will be able to recover their just Dues without a Discovery upon Oath.

'Tis no New Slander upon the *Quakers*, but an Old Truth affirmed of them long since, that tho' *they will not Swear, yet they will Lie*; and it may be Evidenced by their many and constant Writings, that what they Speak or Write is always attended with Equivocations and Mental Reservations.

An Instance of their Injustice which happned in the last Reign, and is as follows;

To the Right Honourable *the* Lords Spiritual *and* Temporal *Assembled in* Parliament, *the humble Petition of the Widows of two* Guinea *Commanders*;

Humbly Sheweth,

WHereas your Petitioners have had their Estates fain into the Hands of *Quaker-Merchants*, and have sought Redress in *Chancery*, where they have had great Experience, for several Years, how little they value what the Affirm, by their Answers to Three several Bills; not only how Equivocatingly and Dilatory (by giving three Answers to one Bill, and not one fair nor full) but how Falsly they have Affirm'd; insomuch that one of the *Quakers* stands Indicted of Perjury, the Bill being found against him at *Hicks's*-Hall, and the other two Bills might bear the same; one of these Bills being a third Widows; and a fourth Widow had her Husband's Book sent Home from a *Quaker* of *Maryland* (concern'd in the Ship with one of the abovesaid Commanders) with above Sixty Leaves cut out, to prevent Discovery of hers and a Fifth Widows Accompts; which was stopt out of the Seamens Wages, by the deceas'd Man's Book, where nothing appear'd but cut Leaves and Old Accompts of former Voyages: And a Sixth Widow, had from one of the abovesaid *Quakers*, Three Accounts of what did belong to her Son deceas'd; First, Five Pounds, he not thinking that her Due, then was proffer'd Ten Pounds, and then had Paid her Eighteen Pounds by the said *Quaker*; tho' there is Reason to believe she had not her full due then. So that our Laws are not able to Defend us from their Tyranny and Oppression; for when

when we Ruin our selves to bring them to *Chancery*, thinking then they must Discover all, yet to our Sorrow we find the contrary; for it is but Affirming roundly, and they clear all at once; and the nicest Bill we can make will not reach them: Our Distress is great; and 'tis sad to think that we must be Ruin'd in the midst of a well-govern'd Country, with good Laws, by the sly Evasions of these Covetous, Over-reaching People, who by their Actions, as well as Principles, appear to have no God but Money, nor Hope beyond the Grave; so that we Humbly beseech your Lordships not to permit that Act to Pass, for their Affirmation to be taken instead of the usual Oath, for we find by experience that it is not Binding to them;

And your Petitioners shall ever Pray, &c.

An Answer to the Quakers *Vindication against their Complaints.*

THose Reflections and Defamations which the *Quakers* complain of, we are ready to Justifie and Prove that it is all Truth, notwithstanding their sly Insinuations to the contrary; and to detect their Hypocrisie and Prevaricating with Your Lordships, have this further to offer in Answer to their Five Considerations.

I. Consideration. *Their Complaint seems very Unreasonable, in that they Accuse* Quaker-Merchants, *but Conceal their Names.*

Answer. Tho' we have not mention'd the Names of the *Quaker-Merchants*, yet what we Charge them withal is Matter of Fact; and we shall readily mention their Names, whenever Your Lordships please to demand them of us; so that this Allegation of theirs is Frivolous.

II. Consideration. *We account it a* Duty, *and therefore make it the* Care *of our Society, not only to* Prevent Disorder *in Conversation, but to* Detect *and* Disallow *all Dishonesty and Injustice in Practice, where-ever we find it.*

Answer. This is false in fact, for they do not think it their Duty, neither do they make it their Practice to Detect and Disallow Dishonesty and Injustice in Practice among themselves, as they pretend; for if they did, how comes it to pass that it was not done against those very Persons by whom we have Suffer'd so Intollerably? For they were sought too for Equity and Justice by us; but they positively refused to Act in the Matter, and and Rejected our Complaints. And that their Mouths may be stopp'd with Shame and Silence, the Persons Address'd to were *F. Ethebridge*, *William Mucket*, *William Ingram*, —— *Plumsted*, —— *Cooper*, and others, *&c.* who are Eminent and Leading *Quakers*; nay, some of them Preachers among them; but in particular *William Mucket*, one of the Persons Signing the Paper delivered by them to Your Lordships; therefore can but Wonder at his Impudence, in daring to impose a Fallacy on Your Honours.

III. Consideration. *We think it an unfair Proceeding, to Charge a whole Society of People with the Faults of a Merchant or two, supposing the Matter of Fact were true.*

Answer. To this we say, 'tis not unfair to Charge the whole Body of that People with Injustice, whilst they Support and Shelter such Black or Foul Villanies to pass undetected; which they have actually don, in omitting to Censure the Obnoxious.

IV. Consideration. *The Crimes complain'd of, we detest and abhor; but whether the Cause of Complaint be true, is to us hitherto unknown: But if the same be yet depending in the High Court of* Chancery, *we doubt not but the Lord-Keeper will decree the Cause according to Equity.*

Answer. Were they so Honest as they would seem to be, and abhor those Crimes which justly causes us to Complain, having rendred us Miserable; they would have serv'd us, your Petitioners, upon Application to them, and prevented this Trouble, and given themselves Satisfaction of the Truth exhibited against their Proselites, and prevented the knowledge of their shameful Actions to the World, which was our earnest desires might be done; and this would have been no difficult matter to them; which would they Affirm honestly, or were they compell'd upon Oath to speak the Truth, we doubt not but the Lord Keeper would soon determine the Point.

V. Consideration. *If any Persons, called* Quakers, *have, or shall be found doing Wrong or Injustice, under the Favour of the* Solemn Affirmation, *the Law doth* most justly *Enjoyn them the same Punishment as for* Perjury.

Answer. Altho' the Law be ready to Support and Relieve the Afflicted, of which the *Quakers* are sensible; yet they well know 'tis difficult to run thro' the Law without Money to support it; which they know your Petitioners are in want of, having all their Effects lying in that Peoples Hands.

From these Considerations of their Hypocrisie and Deceit, in cutting Leaves out of Books of Accompts lying in their Hands, and by their Equivocating and false Answers, which they take no Notice of in their Vindication; Your Petitioners hope your Lordships will not admit their Affirmation to pass as an Oath, which is so pernicious to Justice and Truth;

Our good Laws will not allow Schismatics to Corrupt our Youth by keeping Schools; Therefore do hope your Honours will by no means suffer their Infidel Charity Schools, to stock the next Generation with Infidels.